

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

744 P Street, Sacramento, CA 95814

March 6, 1985



ALL-COUNTY INFORMATION NOTICE I-25-85

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS

SUBJECT: OFFICE OF REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT'S (ORR) FY 1985  
NATIONAL DISCRETIONARY ACTIVITIES PLAN

REFERENCE:

Please find attached a summary of the Office of Refugee Resettlement's (ORR) FY 1985 National Discretionary Activities Plan. Under this plan, contracts will be awarded to various public and private agencies to carry out activities designated as appropriate by ORR. As several of these activities may impact refugees in your area, I believe it is essential that: 1) ORR consider State and county comments prior to awarding contracts, and 2) ORR share with both the State and county the results of their previously funded projects including resource material and tests developed.

If you have any questions, please contact your County Welfare Operations Bureau consultant at 322-3141 or (415) 557-8588. We will forward your questions to ORR for response or as appropriate.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading 'Richard C. Baiz'.

RICHARD C. BAIZ, Deputy Director  
Government and Community Relations

Attachment

cc: CWDA  
ORR-Region IX

CHLV  
Mooching House  
Residence  
DEC 27 1984

FY 1985 NATIONAL DISCRETIONARY ACTIVITIES PLAN  
OFFICE OF REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT

December 14, 1984

NATIONAL DISCRETIONARY FUNDS PROGRAM AND RELATED ACTIVITIES  
FY 1985

NDF OBJECTIVES:

This purpose of the National Discretionary Funds program is to support activities and initiatives requiring a national direction, whose scope is beyond the responsibility of individual States and local programs. Seven objectives in keeping with this principle will be pursued in FY 1985:

1. To improve the resettlement of Highland Lao refugees by testing new and alternative resettlement and service approaches for purposes of eventual incorporation into the regular refugee program.
2. To assist States to develop performance - based management systems for employment services programs.
3. To strengthen the capability of MAAs nationwide.
4. To improve the quality of services to refugees through the provision of technical assistance.
5. To enhance and improve the effectiveness of the refugee program through information dissemination.
6. To leverage mainstream program funds for refugees from other agencies by using NDF funds as the stimulus.
7. To reduce impact.

FY 1985 DISCRETIONARY ACTIVITIES

OBJECTIVE: To improve the resettlement of Highland Lao refugees by testing new and alternative resettlement and service approaches for eventual incorporation into the regular refugee program.

ACTIVITY: 1. Reception and placement demonstrations to resettle Highland Lao new arrivals anticipated in February, 1985, in which different strategies would be used to maximize their adjustment and enhance their resettlement prospects.

Rationale: With an estimated 1500 new Highland Lao refugees scheduled for arrival in February, 1985 and the traditional difficulties that have confronted Highland Lao refugees in their attempts to adjust to American society, special assistance is required to facilitate their adjustment and assimilation into American society. If current resettlement patterns prevail, the February arrivals will locate in areas where sizeable Highland Lao communities already exist. While this factor will in some measure assist with their adjustment, these areas are also those already experiencing the stress of Highland Lao populations whose adjustment to American society has been slow and difficult. Thus additional support for the resettlement of new Highland Lao refugees is needed.

Mechanism: Noncompetitive urgent need grants in selected sites.

OBJECTIVE: To assist States to develop performance based management systems for employment services programs.

ACTIVITY: Continuation of the development and analysis of performance measures and standards.

Rationale: ORR in FY 1984 began a major initiative with the National Governors' Association to assist States to develop performance - based management systems for employment services programs. NGA has organized a National Advisory Committee and a Technical Workgroup consisting of representatives of key States, voluntary and local refugee programs. These bodies have designed a glossary of terms for refugee employment services, performance measures and a national validation process. Two consultations, involving almost all State refugee coordinators, have resulted in voluntary agreements from about 35 States to participate in the testing and validation process.

Mechanism: Cooperative Agreement with NGA-supplement.

Supplements to participating States' social services administration budgets.

OBJECTIVE: To strengthen the capability of MAAs

ACTIVITY: 3. (a) MAA practitioner workshops to bring MAA grantees together to share information about effective MAA social service delivery practices and experiences. (b) On-site technical assistance to MAAs in making linkages with local private sector resources such as United Way.

Rationale: MAA development has been a priority goal of ORR for several years. The result of past support to MAAs has been the emergence of considerable organizational expertise within the MAA community itself. In order to capitalize upon this, practitioner workshops will be organized regionally to permit the sharing of expertise among MAAs as a means of further extending the agency's support of refugee organizations as key actors in the resettlement process.

Mechanism: Regional Office initiatives, supported by a national contract.

OBJECTIVE: To provide technical assistance to improve the quality of services to refugees.

ACTIVITIES: 4. Development of Mainstream English Language Training (MELT) technical assistance materials; provision of MELT technical assistance and training to States and practitioners; development of ELT standards; dissemination of MELT products.

5. Provision of technical assistance and training to States and practitioners in the use of Vocational English Language Training (VELT) materials; dissemination of VELT products.

Rationale: In Fiscal Years 1983/1984, ORR funded seven Mainstream English Language Training (MELT) demonstration projects to field test, refine, and validate the Basic English Language Test (B.E.S.T.), the Student Performance Levels (SPL), and the competency-based Core Curriculum Guide. The results to date from these projects are validated versions of the following:

1. The B.E.S.T., a standardized competency-based proficiency ESL test which measures four different oral/aural skills and tests reading and writing in real life situations.

2. The Student Performance Levels (SPL) document which describes ten levels of language ability in the areas of listening, speaking, reading and writing skills, ability to communicate with a native speaker and readiness for employment.

3. The Core Curriculum Guide, a product of a curriculum adaptation process which included the refugee curricula used in the U.S. as well as the overseas regional curriculum guide.

Current plans call for combining the above products into a technical assistance package for dissemination to States and service providers. Technical assistance and training as a dissemination mechanism is viewed as essential in promoting understanding and efficient usage of the MELT package as well as implementation of the to-be-developed ELT standards. Consultation with States and providers is also proposed to develop ELT standards and to prepare a standards package for dissemination to States for implementation in Fiscal Year 1986.

In Fiscal Year 1984, ORR funded a contract to develop a Vocational English Language Training (VELT) Resources Package for use by refugee English Language Training and employment services providers and State refugee agencies. The package will contain practical procedures to plan, implement and evaluate VELT programs and best practices, a bibliography of proven VELT materials, complete glossaries of VELT terminology and a listing of VELT resource individuals and agencies. Dissemination of the VELT Resource Package will be conducted through the provision of technical assistance and training to States, ELT and employment services providers to promote understanding and efficient use of this package.

Mechanism: Contracts

6. Agricultural technical assistance workshops in small farm planning, production and marketing in 2-3 regional areas.

Rationale: Refugee farm projects have cropped up all over the country, some with ORR assistance. In many instances projects have experienced difficulties with failed crops, lack of sales, unrealistic magnitude, and naive expectations due to lack of knowledge. Some of the pitfalls cited above can be avoided through technical assistance in the planning stage to provide a

reality base. The Highland Lao Agricultural Workshop sponsored by ORR and the Ford Foundation last Spring, for example, was instrumental in influencing a number of nascent farm projects to change their plans from a large scale operation to small scale farming. The provision of agricultural technical assistance through 2-3 small regional workshops at a modest cost is a cost effective way of helping to reduce the degree of trial and error in refugee farming ventures.

Mechanism: Contract

OBJECTIVE: To enhance and improve the effectiveness of the refugee program through information dissemination.

ACTIVITIES: 7. Continuation of the Refugee Materials Center (RMC).

Rationale: The Kansas City Materials Center has served as ORR's reproduction and distribution point for all related refugee materials. Since there continues to be a steady increase in these products as well as an increasing demand for them, it is appropriate to support the continuation of the Materials Center in FY 1985. RMC has agreed to reproduce a bibliography and resource materials related to non-Southeast Asian refugees.

Mechanism: Interagency Agreement with ED.

8. Identification and dissemination of orientation materials and effective ESL and employment strategies for non-Indochinese refugees.

Rationale: The Refugee Program has understandably been focussed on Indochinese refugees; but beginning in 1982, the number of non-Indochinese arrivals has constituted an increasing share of America's new refugee population. However, orientation materials for this population as well as general awareness of their special service needs have been lacking. Therefore, ORR should undertake to identify and disseminate needed materials.

Mechanism: Contract

OBJECTIVE: To leverage mainstream program funds for refugees from other agencies by using NDF funds as the stimulus.

ACTIVITIES: 9. Continuation of the current planning process with NIMH and PHS to develop a refugee mental health program strategy involving mainstream mental health authorities.

Rationale: ORR's 1984 regional consultations as well as other forums have strongly addressed the importance of greater attention to the mental health needs of refugees. This interest has been developed further with the realization that an increasing number of refugees from Vietnamese re-education camps may be included in future caseloads of Indochinese refugees. ORR, in concert with NIMH, has formed a national workgroup to develop an ORR mental health strategy. In formulating this strategy, it has been recognized that ORR can only strategically intervene in the problem in a limited way: namely through State mental health programs and selected training and technical assistance efforts. Initiatives will be proposed to respond to these objectives.

Mechanism: To be determined

OBJECTIVE: To reduce impact.

ACTIVITIES: 10. Continuation of Planned Secondary Resettlement (PSR) activities  
11. Continuation of Favorable Alternate Sites (FASP) activities

Rationale: for PSR and FASP: ORR is committed to initiatives which will ameliorate the impact of refugee concentrations in major resettlement locations. Both the Planned Secondary Resettlement and Favorable Alternate Sites Programs represent ongoing efforts to support the objective of reducing impact and offering more appropriate resettlement alternatives to refugees. PSR supports the relocation of refugees from impacted areas while FASP provides resettlement opportunities for newly arrived free-case refugees in areas with good resettlement prospects.

Mechanism: Standing Announcement-Grants to States



## 12. Continuation of the Highland Lao Initiative

Rationale: Preliminary evaluation findings indicate that the Highland Lao Initiative is working: Hmong job placements have increased significantly while welfare rates have declined in a number of communities. Initial reports also indicate that migration patterns have begun to reverse in some communities with more in-migration than out-migration occurring in the past year. This is attributed in large measure to the increased community stability that has resulted from the funding of Hmong MAAs through the Highland Lao Initiative. While substantial gains appear to have been made under this special initiative at a relatively modest investment, the magnitude of need is such that a one year initiative is not sufficient to meet the need. It behooves ORR to maintain the momentum started in many of these communities through special Highland Lao funding by continuing the initiative another year in communities that show such need.

Mechanism: Grants Supplements

### FILLING CRITICAL SERVICE GAPS

In the past, one purpose of the National Discretionary Funds Program has been to fill critical service gaps which States have not been able to address adequately through the refugee social services program, by funding service projects such as health training, enhanced skills training and secondary wage earner projects. These are service needs that do not require national direction and which can be handled at the State level. This year such service needs will be treated as an initiative distinct from national initiatives and outside of the National Discretionary Funds Program.

Funds would be made available to States for specified service needs through a competitive grants announcement. That announcement will be developed early in 1985.